



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS, LICENSES AND PERMITS

9250 Bendix Road

Columbia, Maryland 21045

410-313-1823

Robert J. Frances, P.E., Director
bfrances@howardcountymd.gov

FAX 410-313-1861
TDD 410-313-2323

MEMORANDUM

MEMO TO: Hearing Examiner for Howard County

THROUGH: Robert Frances, P.E., Director
Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits

TO: Sean Kelly, Division Chief
Inspections and Enforcement Division

FROM: Ed Marquardt, Sign Code Inspector
Inspections and Enforcement Division

DATE: April 29, 2015

SUBJECT: Sign Variance Petition, BA Case 15-001S
Petitioner: Oakmont Village, LLC
Sign Permit(s): Sign B1: S14000413 & S15000067 / Sign B2: S14000414 & S15000066
Location: 11090 Resort Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042

Request Description:

The petitioner is proposing to erect two identical commercial, monument style identification signs for Oakmont Village Apartments. These two identical monument style signs are labeled B1 & B2 within the variance package.

The monument sign labeled B1 is located at the lower, western entrance to Oakmont Village Apartments. Sign permit S14000413, is for the left and right side signs within the monument sign. Sign permit S15000067, is for the front facing sign within the monument sign. The monument sign labeled B2 is located at the upper, east entrance to Oakmont Village Apartments. Sign permit S14000414, is for the left and right side signs within the monument. Sign permit S15000066, is for the front facing sign within the monument sign.

Each monument sign has four identical side panels, three of which contain the signs. Each of the three identical sign panels read as follows: Oakmont Village Apartments with a logo. The identical sign panels have a height of 6ft. /0 in, and width of 6ft. /0 in., for a total of 36.0 sq. ft. of signage. The sign panels start at 5 ft. /4 in., from finished grade, and they are 6ft. /0 in. tall. On top of these four side panels is a 7 ft. /4 in. high, triangle shaped roof. Below the aforementioned four panels is a four sided brick faced base; the combined height of base and sign is 11 ft. /4 in., from finished grade to top of sign. The total combined monument height of base, sign and roof, is a total of 18 ft. /8 in.

Findings of Fact:

This technical evaluation from the perspective of the Howard County Sign Code is based upon the site plan submitted with the variance petition by Triangle Sign and Service, dated March 3, 2015. This plan depicts the current configuration of Parcel R, S and T of Oakmont Village Apartments located along 11090 Resort Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042. It depicts the locations of the two proposed monument signs, B1 and B2, and the Oakmont Village Apartments parking lot with the property's existing site topography grade along Resort Road. **It should be noted that these signs have already been erected at the site without prior approvals and permits.**

The proposed/existing signs would be in violation of the following section of the Howard County Sign Code, To Wit:

Sec. 3.502(e)(1) Permanent Identification signs- Signs permitted in all districts.

Subject to the other conditions of this subtitle, the following signs shall be permitted anywhere within the County:

Signs of a permanent nature setting forth the names of religious facilities, communities, subdivisions, apartments, schools, public/quasi-public institutions and neighborhoods shall be permitted and are exempt from the setback requirements established in subsection 3.501(c)(2)c. Illumination shall be in accordance with restrictions set forth in section 3.508. Except as provided in paragraph (2), of this subsection, such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area or six feet in height.

Both of the proposed monument signs, labeled B1 & B2, are to be located 5 ft. from the Resort Road right-of-way at each of the two east and west project entrances. The distance between the two signs is over 900 ft. along Resort Road. As per the Sign Code, permanent identification signs can only have a height of 6 ft. /0 in. and a total of 32.0 sq. ft. of signage. Each of the proposed monument signs, B1 & B2, have a combined height of the base and sign, of 11 ft. /4 in., above finished grade. Each sign is 5ft. /4 in. higher than the height the sign code would allow. For each of the proposed signs there is a total of 36.00 sq. ft. of signage. Each of the two signs would be 4.0 sq. ft. more than the sign code allows. The exact measurement of the sign wording, with logo, is 4 ft. /9 in in height and 4 ft. /6 in. in width for a total of 21.4 sq. ft. of signage.

Variance Requirement Questions:

Are there unique physical conditions or exceptional topographical conditions peculiar to the property on which the proposed signs are to be located, including the location of existing buildings and other structures, irregularity, narrowness or shallowness of the lot, irregularity of the road right-of-way, location on a highway that has a dependency on nonlocal use?

Yes. These signs are located only 5 ft. from the Resort Road right-of-way, and the property starts to slope downhill at this location. If they are set back any farther, they would need to be even higher than the already requested variance height of 5 ft. /4 in. The view of Monument B1 is affected by the nearby large BGE utility boxes that are as tall as the sign base.

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Are there obstructions, such as excessive grade, building interference, structures or landscaping on abutting property or properties which seriously interfere with the visibility of a proposed sign?

No.

Are there are historical, architectural or aesthetic characteristics which shall be considered?

Yes. These two monument signs are designed to match the existing architectural design of the nearby surrounding buildings and the main entrance identification sign.

If the variance is granted, will it adversely affect the appropriate use or development of adjacent properties, or result in a dangerous traffic condition?

No. Monument B1 needs to have its sign face elevation above the adjacent utility boxes for it to be visible to drivers proceeding west on Resort Road.

Is the requested Variance the minimum necessary to afford relief, and can it be granted without substantial impairment of the intent, purpose and integrity of the code?

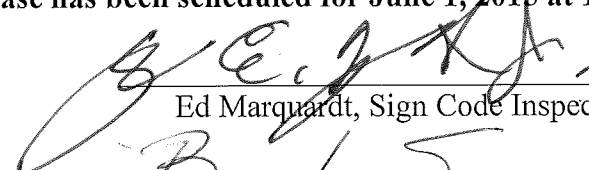
Yes. Please see the attached Internal Memorandum from the Department of Planning and Zoning dated 4/27/15.

Were the practical difficulties or hardships created by the Applicant?

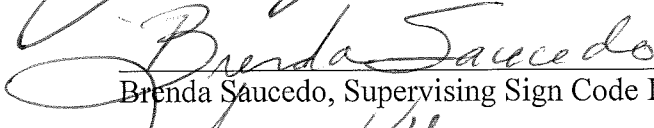
No. Please see the attached Internal Memorandum from the Department of Planning and Zoning dated 4/27/15.

The hearing date for this case has been scheduled for June 1, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

Report Prepared by:


Ed Marquardt, Sign Code Inspector

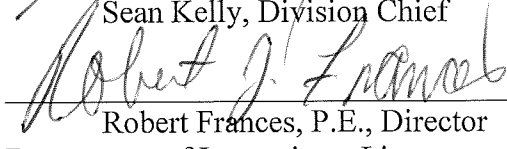
Report Reviewed by:


Brenda Saucedo, Supervising Sign Code Inspector

Report Reviewed by:


Sean Kelly, Division Chief

Report Approved by:


Robert Frances, P.E., Director
Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits

Sign Variance Petition BA15-001S

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Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: BA Case No. 15-001S Sign Variance Petition

To: Ed Marquardt, Jr., Code Enforcement Officer, DILP

From: Dace Blaumanis, Planner, DPZ/DCCP

Date: April 27, 2015

I reviewed the Sign Variance Petition BA 15-001S submitted on behalf of **Oakmont Village, LLC**, located at 11090 Resort Road.

The proposed ground-mounted freestanding signs at the entrances to the development fit the character of the area. Although this property is not located within the Route 40 Corridor Study Area, it is located close by. For properties within the Route 40 study area, the *Route 40 Design Manual* states in Chapter 3: Site Design, 9. Freestanding Signs, SD-53, Ground-Mounted Signs: "Utilize ground-mounted freestanding signs instead of pole mounted signs." I recommend approval of this petition.

If you have questions, please contact me at ext. 4324.

cc: Bill Mackey, Chief, Division of Comprehensive and Community Planning



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

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cc: Bill Mackey, Chief, Division of Comprehensive and Community Planning



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2350

Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director

www.howardcountymd.gov

FAX 410-313-3391

TDD 410-313-2323

March 3, 2015

Dear Mr. Gates:

RE: Oakmont Village LLC
BA-15-001S
S14000413 & S14000414

This Division has received the following comments for the referenced petition. The following clarifications and additional information are still needed before the petition is accepted and forwarded to the Hearing Examiner for a hearing date.

On Page 1, of the Supplement & Introduction included with the variance petition it indicates there is a "Sign A". No sign permit has been applied for at the time of this review. Sign A should not be listed as a part of this variance (BA 15-001S) as a variance will not be required for this particular sign if erected as proposed.

On Page 2, of the Supplement & Introduction included with the variance petition, it lists Signs "B-1" and "B-2", for which two (2) sign permits have been applied for (S1400413 & S1400414). Additional sign permits are required for the "B-1" and "B-2" signs listed within the variance petition. These sign permits are tied to the variance process and currently are missing. The variance package will need to be revised to include the additional required sign permits which are associated with signs B-1 and B-2 described within the variance.

You must submit (9) copies of any revised material to the undersigned.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ed Marquardt at (410) 313-1815 or by email at emarquardt@howardcountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

Toni Sieglein
Division of Public Service and Zoning
Administration

cc: Brenda Saucedo, Sign Administrator